

**ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
STATEWIDE ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN
Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #4**

**August 31, 2006
9:30 a.m. – 12 noon**

ATTENDING:

Mike Kondelis, ADOT - Kingman District
Chuck Gillick, ADOT - N. Region Traffic (call-in)
Daniel Williams, ADOT - Tucson District
Dave Edwards, ADOT - Right-of-Way
Cheyenne Walsh, League of Cities and Towns
Paul O'Brien, ADOT - PreDesign
Reza Karimvand, ADOT - Baja Region Traffic
Donna Jones, ADOT - Permits
Sylvia Hanna, ADOT - Permits
Paul Melcher, YMPO
Matt Burdick, ADOT - CCP

Mike Manthey, ADOT – Traffic
Arnold Burnham, ADOT – TPD
Bryan Perry, Attorney General's Office/Transportation
Bob Hazlett, MAG
Ken Davis, FHWA
Grant Buma, Colorado River Indian Tribe
John Liosatos, PAG
Andy Smith, Pinal County
Sally Stewart, ADOT - CCP
Julie Decker – BLM
Mary Viparina, ADOT – VPM

Consultants: Rick Ensdorff, Phil Demosthenes, Caraly Foreman, Jennifer Spencer, Mike Connors, Preston Kessinger.

NOT ATTENDING: Bob Miller, ADOT – SPM; Reed Henry, ADOT - Traffic; John Harper, ADOT - Flagstaff District; Cherie Campbell, PAG; Chris Fetzner, NACOG; Jeff Martin – City of Mesa, Dale Buskirk, ADOT – TPD; Sam Elters, ADOT – State Engineer; Luana Capponi, ASLD; Manish Patel, ASLD

MEETING NOTES:

Arnold Burnham called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for coming. Introductions were made around the room.

Rick Ensdorff took time to review the agenda which included: Project Overview, including the current activities and schedule; Access Classification System and Assignment Progress; ADOT Communication and Community Partnerships (CCP) outreach plans and actions; and the Next Steps. Rick Ensdorff added this meeting would involve in-depth, detailed information about the classification system. He also stressed this was a critical point in the project and that input was needed from attendees.

Rick Ensdorff then updated the group on agency outreach meetings. He said that over the past 2-½ months all but one – Holbrook – of the meetings had been conducted. There is also work being done on arranging intertribal communities meetings.

At that time, Phil Demosthenes addressed the group and went on to discuss the Access Classification System slide. This slide outlined what we are trying to “get to.” We are not trying to control land use or land planning activities. Of the several bullets, Phil Demosthenes emphasized a couple of items. With regard to the approach to access design, he stressed the importance of getting consistency throughout the State. Another item mentioned, on this slide, was about defining access type – will it be a left only, signalized, no signal, etc.?

The Goals of Categorization slide outlined the reduction of crash frequency as being the primary goal. Phil Demosthenes also said this plan will enable those making the decisions, regarding access management, to say “no” more often than “yes.” The plan will ensure that decisions are “firm”, i.e. will only allow one driveway, not two at this location.

Phil Demosthenes mentioned that access design standards would be discussed at the September 26th, TAC meeting and that Virgil Stover will become more engaged in this “meat and potatoes” portion.

The next two slides involved the classification system proposed categories developed as of June 2006 and another slide showing the categories as of August 31, 2006. Phil Demosthenes said he has received some comments, which were addressed and reflected in the most recent categories. One was the removal of the word “dirt” with “rural collector”, the other, was to keep it simple by using “A”, “B”, and “C”. Phil Demosthenes then posed some questions, “Maybe dirt – rural collector - rolls-up into rural secondary?” There are only two examples for the rural collector category. Maybe have rural and urban expressway roll into major regional? The idea would be to keep things as simple as possible and by reducing categories we can do that.

Grant Buma then stated that he doesn’t want to see the categories simplified into a “one size fits all.” He likes several categories , choices. He further added that the goal of the program is to set up a standard that everyone can use and go to in order to find out what they need, not to make the job easier.

Bryan Perry asked if there were definitions for urban and rural. Phil Demosthenes said, “Not yet.” These will be established as the process moves forward.

Ken Davis said he likes the simplification of categories and offers the idea of using the already existing functional classification system and build around it. The functional classification system includes arterials, collectors and locals. Phil Demosthenes said that the functional classification system is primarily used for funding purposes and doesn’t work well, per his experience with it, for these purposes. He adds the public is not familiar with what is used for funding classes and wants to use a distinguishable system that the public can also understand.

Phil Demosthenes then went on to the next slide, Category Assignment Criteria. There is a need to see the long range plans for the roads. For example, what will the road be in 20 years; will it have a different classification? Grant Buma offered that this could be a double-edged sword, offering the adage “If you build it, they will come,” which can create issues. Phil Demosthenes says, “That’s why we’ve gone out to the local planners, permit people, etc. who deal with this daily, so that their input helps best develop the program.”

The next slide outlined some of the resources being used to help with the category assignments, such as ArcView, Google Earth (maps and satellite) and the state photo log. Using multiple sources helps to avoid items that could be overlooked, i.e. sprawling developments. The state photo log allows users to view roads as they were recorded from a car while driving - a real view. It helps to see driveways, turnoffs, etc. The “driver” can get an eastbound, westbound, etc. view.

The slide with a Sample Assignment Listing was then discussed. This Excel spreadsheet contains such information as mile markers, categories, length, and descriptions. The description will help those who don’t know how to read mile markers know the location. This spreadsheet can then be loaded into ArcView to create a map. It was Reza Karimvand that asked, “How do we break down if a development falls into two categories?” Phil Demosthenes said that would be shown, in a few minutes, during the demonstration. Grant Buma wanted to know if we are looking at existing development? Phil Demosthenes said, “Yes”, and that the state classification map was also being used.

The Key Category Access Factors was the next slide. It outlined intersection and traffic signal spacing, and allowing direct access or requiring obtaining alternative access. Phil Demosthenes said we won't be taking people's property; we will be providing them alternatives. Proof of access will be a necessity.

Phil Demosthenes then ran through the category slides, which showed pictorial examples and provided additional description information.

It was then that Preston Kessinger started going through some examples using the state photo log.

Example #1 was north of Flagstaff on US 89. At milepost 41, 20 miles north of Flagstaff, there's an example of a major regional to a rural principal. The transition is made when we "lost" a median. Ken Davis mentioned that ADOT has plans to upgrade this area and he wondered how that would affect the classification. The idea would be to issue permits telling them what will happen to them in the future with regard to their access.

Grant Buma said the decision process (category assignment) is very important and will be developer based. In looking to the future, if developer based, it will depend on who buys and develops the land. Doesn't this exclude State lands, BLM, etc. from the planning process? Grant Buma then asked, for the greater needs of the public, if there was a way that planning could take in more concern of commercial development interests/needs. Phil Demosthenes replied this is part of local land use decisions – comprehensive general plans, planning and zoning and coordinating with ADOT and locals.

Mike Manthey commented that land use and access management plans go awry on SR 69 and US 60, Gold Canyon. He said that, currently, we can have concepts of an access management plan, but it doesn't have teeth. Phil Demosthenes said this plan does have teeth and that it will be regulatory. Mike Manthey then added that controlling access comes at what cost – paying for the right to deny access to someone? Grant Buma responded that, often, when developers come in a rural area, the population and traffic volumes don't take into account infrastructure and impact needs of the future.

Example #2 is northwest of Flagstaff coming into town – rural principal. Phil Demosthenes told the group, as you can see from this example, how difficult classification can be and says that's why we are going to the districts first, then locals, to get their input in developing this system. There's a push on local government to provide secondary access – "strip towns" are unsafe.

Example #3 is around Sedona, north on SR 179, starting south and heading into town. This is an instance of a narrow shoulder, no driveways. It's a good example of how logistics of road geometrics is not solely tied to a classification category. This is a case where "volume" of traffic on roads impacts its category assignment. Design, operation and safety are key considerations.

Ken Davis commented that if you try to access this (example) today, it will be changed in 5 years. ADOT is paying to fix this. He says, based on what exists today, we really need to look at what agencies have already planned for. Phil Demosthenes mentions that category assignment and planning work together in concert. Ken Davis then added that he hopes ADOT would deny a driveway knowing ADOT will end up taking it out in a year (due to development or future changes). Ken Davis also stated that you can't have people landlocked. This begs the question Reza Karimvand posed, "When you assign a category and it changes due to development, do we go back and change the category?" Phil Demosthenes said that's a decision the board will need to make, but adds if you know development is coming, go with the highest category assignment you can.

Reza Karimvand used SR 87 and an area development as an example. He said in five years, their investment and changes would be significantly different. Phil Demosthenes responded, "But the roadway would already be in a higher category – foreseen as growth. If not, then those regulators, e.g. developers, should prepare a justification plan to go to the State Transportation Board." Grant Buma replied, "But wouldn't this mean that those with bigger pockets would have more impact in changing categories?" Phil Demosthenes said they would still have to go through the same local planning process and this access regulatory process.

Sally Stewart mentioned that ADOT has an internal team made up of both public and private sector representatives that are reviewing and developing an integrated traffic interchange request process.

Grant Buma also provided an example; the just completed widening and repairing of Highway 95 in Parker. This has gone through multiple agencies. He said the challenge has been dealing with different classifications (functional). The BIA has a different set of criteria. Is there an effort to make standards consistent with one another? Rick Ensdruff said that yes, when going through the permit process, traffic impact analysis process, we are not doing this to add another system; we want them linked together.

Grant Buma then inquired whether money that is received for roads from BIA, ADOT, and/or FHWA based on the roadway's funding classification, can this access management classification system also benefit us with funding? The response was that category assignments are different from the assignments, or classifications, used for funding. It seems to work better that way – to keep the funding separate.

Rick Ensdruff discussed the steps of the process. This first step of the three-step process is assigning roads a category. This is the phase we are currently in. The next step is to work with the Districts, such as we currently are with the Flagstaff, Kingman and Tucson Districts. We will ask those districts what their future land plans are, including issues and concerns. This step should occur in September. Steps two and three will fine-tune classifications. The final step is to work with districts and local agencies.

The discussion of process change was brought up. What if a developer says, "I have a new city?" The response was that if the developer does not keep with the land use plan, they go to the local agency; they don't go to ADOT first. This helps to focus land use issues.

Grant Buma asked if we could tie classification to funding issues. Phil Demosthenes responded, "No." This is to limit private access. Grant Buma responded he thinks it's tough to differentiate the funding from access. Arnold Burnham responded, reiterating that the ADOT classification funding is totally different than this classification system. Rick Ensdruff said that money does not drive these classifications.

Mike Manthey requested that he be notified of District meetings.

Arnold Burnham mentioned that meetings with the tribal council are also planned as part of the process.

Sally Stewart and Matt Burdick then addressed the group to discuss the ADOT Communication and Community Partnership (CCP) outreach program. Sally Stewart mentioned the first elected officials meeting and TAG meetings are the first week of September.

Matt Burdick then went on to discuss Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG). He said the goal is to educate the public as to how it affects them and their local land use planning efforts/decisions and also to get local agencies and organizations to support and educate their governing bodies. He then went through the handout.

The communication plan has two segments, the management of local communities and, secondly, elected officials. The goal is to help educate about the application of management decisions and to garner support for the Statewide Access Management Program (SAMP).

Matt Burdick then mentioned some upcoming meetings. The meeting on October 9th is a technical forum geared toward city managers and related officials. The October 23rd meeting is for an executive audience.

Sally Stewart then went on to discuss the statewide region. She mentioned that in addition to internal ADOT public-private groups, another group, the governor's growth and infrastructure initiative is related on similar issue needs and the plan is to coordinate with them. She added that CCP will focus on executive leadership. It will start with the rural transportation council. ADOT is also trying to make appointments with the Council of Government (COG)s and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)s. Outreach to developers is also part of the plan.

There are three milestones that were outlined – TAG meetings, tribal meetings, and developer meetings (basic brainstorming sessions). The timeline to complete these milestones is March 2007. It was added that comments are welcomed for the draft strategy.

Dave Edwards asked if there would be general outreach to the public. Matt Burdick replied, not at this time. The current focus is on development. The timeline for the study hinders the ability to conduct public outreach now. Instead, the public communication will come into play as the program is implemented. For now, ADOT is relying on local community officials to make decisions.

It was also asked if there would be outreach to local government agencies. That would be done through the executive council of the MPOs and COGs. It will not be 100%, but there should be some. Letters will be sent to mayors if they are not a part of the MPO or the COG. There is an effort to talk to ADOT upper management to have them champion the access management program (AMP). Copies of presentations will be available on the website – to help provide information to other parties.

The traffic interchange (TI) group was then discussed. There are two end products; one is the policy for working with developers on traffic interchanges, the other, a public involvement procedure protocol. It was added that developers are following ADOT procedures for their outreach. She noted that there are some 40 privately-funded traffic interchanges (TIs) currently on the books.

Arnold Burnham asked if a standard press release will be ready for local media. Sally Stewart responded that they can put together a media packet / process.

Reza Karimvand asked, "For developer groups, may we attend?" Sally Stewart responded yes, but the upcoming meetings have not yet been scheduled. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members will receive the information regarding meetings once they are final. Sally Stewart mentioned that she welcomes the names of developers that may be critical and to send her that information.

NEXT STEPS / FUTURE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) MEETINGS

The next Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 26th. There is also a meeting to discuss framework on Tuesday, October 24th.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.